



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913

PH (517) 373.1635 | FAX (517) 373.3300

www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/vanwoerkom/

For Immediate Release
June 22, 2004

Contact: Jeff Cobb
(517) 373-1635

Sen. Van Woerkom introduces bill to make Friend of the Court payments timelier and more efficient

LANSING – Custodial parents could see timelier Friend of the Court payments through a bill requiring the state to disburse child support payments electronically either by direct deposit or through a debit card system, said Sen. Gerald Van Woerkom, R-Norton Shores.

“The goal of this bill is to ensure that Friend of the Court payments get into the hands of custodial parents as quickly and as efficiently as possible,” Van Woerkom said.

“Technology will enable our Friend of the Court system to be more reliable and ensure that children remain our top priority.”

The bill would require Michigan to eliminate the distribution of Friend of the Court payments through paper checks. Instead, an electronic distribution system would be established through direct deposit or a debit card system. The changes in technology would be similar to the technology the Family Independence Agency is currently using to distribute its benefits.

“Senator Van Woerkom’s bill accommodates custodial parents who do not have bank accounts and eliminates the need to generate paper checks – which reduces mailing expenses,” said Patricia Steele, administrator of the Muskegon County Friend of the Court. “It eliminates the possibility that a check will be delivered to a bad address and could significantly reduce the amount of time child support money spends sitting in suspended accounts instead of in the hands of custodial parents.”

Senate Bill 1319 was referred to the Senate Family and Children Services Committee.

###